

Merritt Parkway, (Southbound) Maintenance Garage
Abutting the north side of the Merritt Parkway
at the 14.2 mile mark
New Canaan
Fairfield County
Connecticut

HAER No. CT-135

HAER
CONN,
I-NECA,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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MERRITT PARKWAY (SOUTHBOUND) MAINTENANCE GARAGE

HAER No. CT-135

Location: Abutting the north side of the Merritt Parkway at the 14.2 mile mark in New Canaan, Connecticut

Present Owner: Connecticut Department of Transportation
Wethersfield, Connecticut

Present Use: Maintenance garage

Significance: This garage is the primary maintenance facility for Merritt Parkway work crews. Historically, this building housed maintenance vehicles, the Landscape Division of the Highway Department, and an office for the state police.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1940
2. Architect: George Dunkelberger, Connecticut Highway Department
3. Contractor: S. C. Porris Construction Company
4. Alterations and additions: Some garage-bays openings have been filled in.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The maintenance garage and office is a brick building with Colonial Revival details.
2. Condition of fabric: Overall condition appears to be good. Ivy covers much of the center gable of the office building. The garage has been altered, and several bay openings have been bricked in.

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B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The maintenance garage and offices are arranged in a T-plan; the office building forms the arms and the garage is the stem. The office block is one-story, five bays long and one bay deep. The center and end bays project forward a few feet from the front facade. The maintenance garage is eleven bays long and approximately two bays wide. The bay closest to the office wing projects a few feet forward from the facade. The two wings are connected by a room as deep as the garage and half a garage bay wide.
2. Walls: The office and garage are faced with red brick laid in a Flemish bond. Many bay openings have been filled in with red brick of a lighter shade laid in a running bond. Projecting bricks form four pilasters on the office's centered gable. Quoins are formed at the corners of the office wing by recessing four headers at every seventh course. The stringcourse around the top of the garage bays is a meander pattern. Bricks frame an octagon on the face of the projecting garage bay.
3. Structural system, framing: The maintenance garage is a steel and brick structure, and the office is probably load-bearing brick. Square pipe columns support girders oriented in the short direction of the garage. Five beams in the opposite direction supporting the steel deck bear on these girders or on walls. Brick bearing walls occur at the ends of the garage and between bays one and two, two and three, and nine and ten (with the first bay being located next to the office block).
4. Porches, stoops, balconies: The porch of the office is at the center bay. Three steps with cut stone treads lead to a small stoop of cut stone. The risers of the steps are faced with small pieces of cut stone in mortar. A metal railing is anchored to the stone on two sides of the stoop.
5. Chimneys: Brick chimneys are located at both ends of the maintenance garage.

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6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The office block can be entered by five doors. The front entrance is a glazed, wood-panel door with a fanlight and sidelights. The rest are security doors. There is one garage door on the northwest wall, and two on the southwest wall. A double wood door with a fanlight is located on the north side of the room connecting the two wings. The north side of the projecting bay of the garage has a door with sidelights. Most of the garage bay openings have been filled in with brick-faced block on the south wall; only bays one, ten, and eleven are still open. A small overhead door on the projecting bay is not used. On the north wall, bays two through nine still have garage doors. Bay nine contains a door.
- b. Windows and shutters: The windows of the office are primarily eight-over-eight-light double-hung sash on the front facade, and six-over-six-light sash on the gable ends. The south side of the room linking the office and garage had a window with a fanlight that has since been shuttered. Three of the infilled bays of the garage contain square fenestration filled with glass block. Three octagonal openings on the end wall are bricked in.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The end bays of the office have hipped roofs, the center bay has a front-gable, and the other two bays have side-gables. The room connecting the garage and office has a gabled roof. The roofs are covered with slate shingles. The garage probably has a flat roof with a brick parapet.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The office block is organized similarly to its five-bay plan with one room per bay. The rooms are used as offices and lounges. The maintenance garage is open throughout except for the location of interior walls as noted above.

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2. Flooring: The office has linoleum throughout. The garage floor is a concrete slab.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: The office walls are plastered in the offices and painted brick in the lounges. The garage walls are bare or painted brick.

D. Site:

1. Historical landscape design: The office block faces east, and the length of the garage is oriented east to west. The back of the southbound New Canaan service station faces the south wall of the office wing. The complex is accessible from the west end of the service station parking lot and from a local road on the north side. Pavement extends around the garage and office with some grass and trees planted just in front of the office wing.
2. Outbuildings: A concrete block and wood framed barn for salt storage is located just off the northwest corner of the garage.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

"State May Build Garage and Two Gasoline Service Stations in Parkway Here." New Canaan Advertiser, 9 February 1939, p. 1, col. 1.

"Work Is Started on Gas Stations." New Canaan Advertiser, 21 September 1939, p. 1, col. 2.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This report was prepared by HAER Engineer Corinne Smith and HABS/HAER Historian Todd Thibodeau as part of a larger project documenting the Merritt Parkway in the summer of 1992.

For additional information on the Merritt Parkway and its history and structures, see HAER No. CT-63.